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ern biology, as his idea of the continuity of the animal and human mind has more lately been taken as the fundamental hypothesis of comparative psychology. It seems needless to state how much modern social science and theory is beholden to the doctrine of materialism and a more or less biological habit of mind. One can only suggest how much Holbach with his naturalistic view of things may have contributed to what bids fair to prove a most fertile line of thought. It remains for some careful scholar to determine the value of that contribution.

The foregoing statements are necessarily brief and inadequate. The problem has been to compress a great mass of material rather than inflate a thin film of knowledge. This present paper, therefore, can scarcely be considered more than a catalog of facts, a kind of guide-book to Holbach. There can be no doubt, however, that he deserves a more prominent niche in the history of thought than he now occupies. M. Lanson has assured me that there was a great movement *caché derrière le déisme*, namely, the anti-theistic movement led by Holbach, which has not been explored or exploited as yet. What it might yield in the way of a general clarification of thought, no one can say. At least it would form one chapter in the history of man's mind yet to be written, which, if it were done in a scholarly spirit of coolness and calm, might elucidate an intellectual problem of universal utility and interest.

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CHARLES A. MERCIER.

1852-1919.

Dr. Charles Mercier, who died on the 2d of September, 1919, was a practical alienist physician and the author of several books, of which the most important are *Criminal Responsibility*, *Crime and Insanity*, *Crime and Criminals*, and *Conduct and Its Disorders*. He was born in 1852, the son of the Rev. L. P. Mercier, a clergyman of Huguenot descent, and as his family was left badly off on his father's death, his early years were spent as a cabin-boy and warehouseman in a woolen warehouse in the city before he took up medicine as a career. He took a high degree at the London

University, and became F.R.C.P. and F.R.C.S. The bent of his mind was toward the study of mental diseases and he gained a wide practical knowledge of these as medical officer in charge of the Bucks County Asylum and the City of London Asylum at Stone. He strenuously advocated a bill to legalize the treatment of insanity in its early stages, which was more than once brought before the House of Lords. In January, 1919, he was awarded the Swivey Prize for his book, *Crime and Criminals*, the same award he had received ten years before for his *Criminal Responsibility*, a work dealing especially with the psychological aspect of crime, and the states of mind accompanying criminal actions. This original work was the first to establish firmly the doctrine of taking into account grades of responsibility or just liability to punishment in all criminal charges. In *Crime and Criminals* Dr. Mercier, reacting against the theories of Lombroso, repudiates the idea that the criminal has any fundamental difference from ordinary men. To him "every man is a potential criminal," and the perpetration of crime is consequent upon a temptation which exceeds the resisting power or "breaking-point" of the individual. Dr. Mercier, besides his studies in psychology and insanity, was an opponent of Sir Oliver Lodge, and others who believe in the survival of human personality.

Of the subjects of which Dr. Mercier possessed a specialist's knowledge he wrote with a vigor and breadth of view not always found in specialists, and his work is marked by independence of authority and originality. He is not so fortunate in his parergon, *A New Logic*,¹ where he attacks what he imagines to be Aristotelian logic with the vigor of complete misapprehension; assuming that logic "is much in the same position that was occupied two hundred years ago by witchcraft. Without being formally attacked, it is crumbling to ruin, and losing its hold upon the minds of men."

¹ London: Longmans Green and Co.; Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1912. Cf. *The Monist*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 302ff.